was technically impossible to put such innovations into practice and so he turned his attention to the surrounding space. Here he performed his transformations or created new settings so that the garden would become a more attractive place. In the villas of Trebbio (1427), Cafaggiolo (1451), and Careggi (1457) Michelozzo forged a synthesis between the old and the new.

Even though theoretical studies on the Roman villa had been one of the favorite subjects taken up by Renaissance architects, at first they failed to make actual imitations, mainly since they had no models to copy. In fact, their passion for archaeological excavations went no further than digging up works of art and never to the point of unearthing entire building complexes. Moreover, the new architecture, restricted to a well-defined social group, was confined to a definite type of edifice. The real nature of the Renaissance villa only emerged in the second half of the 15th century when the owner of the villa, now that the new philosophical and literary concepts had come to be accepted, saw his Humanistic ideals enacted in his country home (otia in « locus amoenus »).

These concepts were developed by the Humanist architect Leon Battista Alberti in his « De Re Aedificatoria. » Through the study of Latin texts, Alberti sought first of all to pick out the social reasons that led to the birth and development of the Roman villa, though he never neglected at the same time to study both their perspective and proportions (and, in fact, he was one of the first to master these arts). Simultaneously he took up a study of the social structure of his times whereby he attributed a specific building to each of the social classes; thus, the structure and function of the nobleman's villa derive from the city building, whereas the rural building is characteristic of the bourgeoisie.

Another who devoted himself to studies on the villa, albeit from a different outlook, was Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Although he closely followed the precepts of Vitruvius and Alberti, his studies were confined to the practical problems involved in construction and the relationship between garden and villa.

A return to the Roman models as an attempt to achieve a new, well-defined type of villa, came about towards the end of the 15th century when the medieval tradition had been wholly abandoned. These architectural concepts were used as a model by Giuliano da Sangallo in the villa he designed at Poggio a Caiano (near Florence) for Lorenzo de' Medici. The villa is inspired by Roman art in the simplicity of the layout and the technique used in blending the elements harmoniously conceived in accordance with the canons set forth by Alberti. Here the Humanistic view of country life held by a political man involved in both agriculture and his favorite intellectual pursuits is expressed in the frieze over the trabeation of the entrance.

Theories and principles were formulated for gardens as well. The garden was conceived as the link between the building and the countryside. Specific treatises, such as Francesco Colonna's « Hypnerotomachia Poliphili » were also used as reference points. There is a revival of elements belonging to Roman gardens, such as the geometric patterns of the flowerbeds, plants shaped by pruning, column pergolas, benches, grottos, vases, and fountains. Once again antique and contemporary statues peopled the pathways, while flowers, no longer the dominant element, were relegated to secret gardens in special zones. Grass labyrinths, exotic plants, islands dotting ponds, and secret gardens are only a few on the novelties of the 15th century garden. In addition, innovations of a more practical nature, such as the use of uneven surfaces by means of terracing and wide-tread staircases (e.g. Villa Medici in Fiesole near Florence), became widespread. Nevertheless, it took another full century until a perfect equilibrium between art and nature, as Alberti had recommended, was actually achieved.

By the end of the 16th century as Hauser writes, « the Pontifical State had assumed political hegemony over a divided Italy... The Curia as a financial power surpassed all the princes, lords, bankers, and merchants of Northern Italy: it could thus outdo them in pomp and in the field of art began to supplant Florence, which up to then had held the leading role... At this point arose that incomparable artistic activity... » a result of which was the development of the villa in grandiose and luxurious form. The villas as a group thus became an example of architecture defining a typology. The residence belonging to Cardinal Bessarione at Porta Capena is too tiny to be a precedent of any real importance and, on the other hand, the popes and high dignitaries had, up to that time, been entirely engrossed in other building projects such as St. Peter's and the restoration of the basilicas, while, at the same time, town planning problems in the cities had started to seriously emerge.

Of all the archaeological excavations of the day, the monuments which had the greatest influence with regard to classical Roman architecture were the « Domus Aurea » the « Orti degli Aciili, » the Palatine Hippodrome, and, most of all, the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina. Their architectural features, together with the canons expressed in the literary tradition, influenced the layout of the Belvedere Court in the Vatican and the construction of Villa Madama on the slopes of Monte Mario.

The transformation of the old Belvedere of Innocent VIII and the pre-existing Vatican palace provided new models of space and perspective which were in part based upon the theories set forth by Alberti and Francesco di Giorgio Martini. This complex was in fact the work of an artist, Donato Bramante, who, in those years, as befit any